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THE TITHE OF THE

IMPRIMATUR,

Jan. 7. 1697.

Z. Isham, R. P. D.  
Henrico Episc.  
Lond. à Sacris.

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A

E. 10. 28

# SERMON

Preached at

**Christ = Church,**

BEFORE THE

GOVERNORS

OF THAT

HOSPITAL,

ON

St. *STEPHEN*'s Day.

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By WILLIAM FLEETWOOD, Rector of *St. Austin's*.

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L O N D O N :

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SEYMOUR

THE CHURCH

OF THE

HOSPITAL

SEYMOUR'S DAY

704:90

WILLIAM B. BROWN, Secretary

FOR THE  
THE CHURCH OF THE  
HOSPITAL, and the  
CAMPBELL, MDXCI



To the Right Worshipful  
Sir JOHN MOOR, Kt. and Alderman,  
President of CHRIST'S HOSPITAL, London;

To the Worshipful  
MATTHEW HAWES, Esq; the Treasurer;

And to the Rest of the  
Worshipful Governors of the said Hospital.

Gentlemen,

**I**T was with great readiness that I undertook the  
Preaching of this Annual Sermon, and it is not  
with any great reluctance that I submit to the  
Printing it: I propose the same end, and entertain the  
same hopes, of doing good by it now, as I did then;  
and somewhat the more, I promise my self, by how  
much farther it may chance to spread. I am loath to  
say, that the Absence of a great many Persons whom I  
looked for, whom Custome, and the obligation of their  
Trust should call together on these Solemn good Occa-  
sions, might furnish me with an excuse for making  
publick this Discourse, if otherwise I wanted one:  
For if it be necessary men should hear these things,  
we must pursue Them when they fly from Us, and give  
them Opportunities out of course, when they will not  
take them in the appointed Seasons. But I hope there

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## The Epistle Dedicatory.

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is no need of any *Excuse* for doing this. It is an excellent Subject I have taken in hand, and greatly concerns us all, but those especially whom God hath bless'd with great Estates. Whether I have treated it well or no, will best be seen by its effects; for if that be the best Sermon, which brings forth the best Fruits, it will depend entirely upon You, whether This shall be a Good one or no. Make it, I intreat you, in the name of God, as good as possibly you can; and let the Poor and Needy in their several kinds, both see and feel, that you like and love to practice, as well as read, a Sermon upon Charity.

The God of mercy and compassion keep and bless you, for your Care and Faithfulness, in the discharging that good Trust reposed in you, and raise you up continually Benefactors, to support the constant great Expence that you are at, To the Glory of his Great Name, the Honour of our Holy Church and Nation, and this great City in especial manner, and to the comfort of his poor and needy Servants.

I am,

Gentlemen,

Your most Affectionate, and  
most Humble Servant,

W. FLEETWOOD,

GALAT. vi. 10.

*As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of Faith.*



**S**AINT Paul being about to conclude his Letter to the *Galatians*, and having heard ('tis very likely) that the Pastors of that Church were much neglected, exhorts them to the exercise of due and decent liberality towards the Ministry; in the 6th Verse, *Let him that is taught in the word,*

*communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things. Agreeable to what he saith, 1 Cor. 9. 11. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? Do ye not know, That they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the Temple; and they which wait at the Altar, are partakers of the things of the Altar? And, lest any one should object, that this refers to the Jewish practice, and concerneth not the Christians; He adds in the 14th Verse, Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.*

And foreseeing what Excuses and Pretences men would make; some, That their Families were to be maintain'd; others, that they had not wherewithal; and all of them shifting it off, as well as they could; he proceeds in the 7th, *Be not deceived, God is not mocked;*

Luke 10. 6.

ed; Don't think it such a light and trifling matter, this that I have mentioned: God will not suffer himself to be despised and mocked in the Persons of his Ministers: *He that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me; i. e. God, saith our Saviour.* And tho he may for a while defer his Judgments, yet he will one day, in its proper season, punish the Contempts and Injuries that are pour'd upon his Servants. And lest they should think that all, that goes besides their own hands, were lost, and so should be withheld from contributing, as they should, and ought to do; He tells them, That whilst they were doing good, they were, in a manner, sowing, what in time would rise up to a plenteous Harvest: that it was not thrown away, that they advanc'd to this, or any other other good purpose; that they serv'd a very Righteous, and a Faithful Master, one that would not forget their labour of love, in ministring to good Ends, and good People; One that was able, and engag'd by frequent Promises, to make them good amends, and fair Returns, for all the expence they should be at, on his account: and One that on the other hand would take a strict account, how 'twas they spent the Stock he made them Stewards of in this life, how they employed the Talents he committed to their trust: *For what a man soweth, that shall he also reap: for, He that soweth to the flesh, He that considers nothing but the necessities, conveniencies and pleasures of this life, without regard to, or provision for the next; he that seeketh his own only, and looks after nothing but himself, and mindeth neither God, nor God's Servants, shall of the flesh reap corruption: the Harvest shall be answerable to the Seed sown, he shall heap together what shall come at last to nothing.* Whereas *he that soweth to the spirit, be that* liveth

liveth a spiritual life, whose heart is with God; whose thoughts are above, and who mindeth heavenly things, and whose Actions consequently are guided by God's Rule, and accordingly does all the good he can; this Man *shall*, from this Spiritual Seed, *reap life everlasting*. And then by way of encouragement adds, *And let us not be weary of well-doing*; whilst we are here on Earth, let us be doing all the good we can; let us with cheerfulness and readiness of mind be exercising our Charity to good people, and sowing to the Spirit all we can; *for in due time we shall reap*. The Apostle persists in his Metaphor still, and distinguishes the Seasons of sowing, and of reaping; Now is the time of sowing whilst we live, now is the season of doing good, whilst Christ in his Gospel shines upon us in this life; and the time of reaping is that to come. Solomon says, that *he who observeth the winds, shall never sow*; and he that will, in like manner, wait till the world goes well with good men, and all things succeed to the desires of the charitable and bounteous person, before he will do good, shall never do any good at all; for men will always be unthankful, and the World will always return evil for good: and therefore, that we should not be weary of well doing, the Apostle propounds the greatest reward imaginable, but in the other World, and that too upon supposal of perseverance to the end, — *if so be that we faint not*: for they who persevere not to the end, are like those foolish Husbandmen, who, when they have plowed and sowed, proceed no farther, take no care to cover it from the Fowls, or from the nipping Frost, or scorplings of the Sun; they have thrown their Seed, and Time and Pains away to bad purpose; and so do they who begin in sowing to the Spirit, but faint before the time of reaping come. In hopes then of this

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glorious Harvest, *Let us, whilst we have opportunity, do good to all men, but especially to them who are of the household of faith, to God's Domestic Servants in especial manner.* In which words we have these things to consider.

- I. The Duty exhorted to, of doing good ; *Let us do good.*
- II. The extent of this Duty as to Persons, *to all men in general, but especially to God's Domestic Servants, especially to the household of faith.*
- III. The time of doing it, *whilst we have opportunity.*
- IV. and *Lastly.* The Reward we are to set continually before our eyes, to the stirring us up to the doing good, implied in the word *therefore* : He had said in the foregoing Verse, *We shall reap in due time* ; and in the Text, *Therefore, whilst we have opportunity, let us do good to all men.*

Of these in their order : and,

- I. *Ist,* Of the Duty exhorted to, *Let us do good.*

*To do good*, is a phrase of large and comprehensive signification, and takes in the whole duty of a Christian man, to which we are undoubtedly exhorted in the general ; but in this particular, *to do good*, signifies *to do acts of charity and beneficence.* And indeed it is hardly possible to do good with respect to ones Neighbour, but that good must be a kind of Charity, a relief or succour to them in some particular or other, where they wanted it, or else it could not deserve the name of *good*, which must have relation to some evil or inconvenience they would otherwise have suffered ; and it has obtain'd by custom, that *doing good*, and *being charitable*, are phrases of the same importance. And so it is frequently



quently in the *New Testament*, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-day? saith our Saviour, when he was curing Diseases, Mark 3. 4. *Ye have the poor with you always; when you will, you may do them good*, Mark 14. 7. *Charge the rich, that they do good*, 1 Tim. 6. 18. *But to do good, and to communicate, forget not*, Heb. 13. 16. And that doing good in this and in all senses, indeed, is the general duty of us all, is not only plain from Reason and Scripture, but acknowledged and confess'd by all the World.

When a man is the Object of this Charity and Good himself, then he sees nothing so clear and evident, as that all mankind are by Nature obliged, and urged by Reason, and compelled by Scripture, to shew that Charity, and do that Good he finds he wants; and he thinks the man injurious to him, that refuses him what he stands in need of, and the other could supply without his detriment and loss. And when the scene changes, and he himself becomes the party applied to, he does not plead that he is not oblig'd to relieve the distressed Suppliant, but makes excuses of his inabilities, and seems concern'd that he wants the power to answer to his will. And whether mens Excuses are good or bad, whether their wants be true or pretended ones, is no great matter here; they serve alike to shew, that in Reason and Conscience all men are, and hold themselves oblig'd to do all the good they can. So that there needs no proving the reasonableness and necessity of mens complying with the Exhortation in the Text, *Let us do good*.

One might also, if there were occasion, enforce this matter farther, from the consideration of the pleasure, and the profit too, that attends the practice of doing Good. There is nothing fills the mind with more con-

tent and satisfaction, than acting agreeably to natural Light, and to the Rules of Reason: There is a secret joy, moreover, springs up in the heart, at helping of a fellow-creature, in rescuing Humane Nature from the wrongs and mischiefs that it suffers in our Brother: There is an innocent and pleasing kind of pride in being superior to the evils that afflict another; and it makes up a triumph in the mind, to free that other from them. There is nothing, in a word, that is more pleasing in contrivance and design, nothing more grateful and delightful in the acting, nothing that leaves a sweeter odour after it, and raises more complacency in the mind, and glad remembrances, than doing good. Neither is the profit any whit inferior to the pleasure, as might be shewn at large from several Heads, if it were necessary. I rather chuse to pass on to the Second thing to be considered;

II. II. The extent of this Duty of doing Good, which is to all men.

The *Galatians* were in danger of *Judaizing* in their Practices as well as Doctrines, *i. e.* of loving none but themselves and Countrey-men. The *Jews* were grown so famous for this churlish and uncharitable temper, that the *Heathens* took great notice of it. They would not so much as direct a Wandering-Passenger into the Right-way, nor shew a Thirsty Traveller a Fountain where he might refresh his Thirst, unless he were a Jew or Proselyte. And our Saviour seems to hint at this, when he tells them who their Neighbour was, *Luke 10. 30.* where he discovers this ill-natured practice, by the Priests and Levites passing by the Stranger, who were both of them Jews, and informs them, they must leave off those unneighbourly, ungenerous and narrow Notions,



tions, and must do good to all mankind, as it came in their way ; and not imagine that the *Jews* alone were the Neighbours intended by God, when he commanded them, *to love their neighbours as themselves.* And it is with this prospect that St. Paul advises the *Galatians* *to do good to all men* ; not to suffer themselves to be led away by the example of the close and narrow-hearted *Jews* ; but to account that all that wanted their assistance, had a right to it, by virtue of that *title of Want* : That our Saviour had commanded them, not only to do good to those they loved and were beloved by, but to those that cursed, hated, and despitefully used them ; *That they might be the Children of their Father which is in heaven, who maketh the sun to rise upon the evil and good, and sendeth rain on the just and unjust.* Not that they should make no difference and distinction in their charitable acts, but give promiscuously, and alike to all ; for that cannot be the meaning of the place, which is contradicted in the next words, *but especially to those of the household of faith* ; But that no Nation, Party, or Religion, should exclude men from their charity, if their wants had made them objects of it : That all mankind was fitted for their love and pity, and was to partake of it in time and place convenient, notwithstanding his Opinions in Religion, difference of Nation, Practice, or Belief : That People's wants made them Objects of Charity, and not their Agreement in Opinion, or their being of such a Party. And therefore he that would be Charitable, must relieve the wants of the Neccessitous, whoever they were, as it came in his way. When therefore he exhorts us to do good to *all*, he only means that no one should be absolutely excluded and incapacitated from receiving benefit, when his condition calls for it, and ours will bear the doing

it. He does not hereby make void the difference and distinction that the Laws of Nature, Nations, and Religion, have already made, and such as are certain; nor such as by unfortunate accidents, or unforeseen, or unavoidable calamities, are become such. The calls of Nature must and will be heard first, and no Laws can or will supersede them: And the Positive Laws of God are to be heard next, and next to them the Laws of the Land; and after these are satisfied, men are left to govern themselves by the rules of Prudence and Discretion, by the Affections of their Minds and the Examples of wise and good People. It would be tedious to recount the Particulars that are to be preferred in doing good; I will only give a word or two, to the instance St. Paul uses here, *especially to those that are of the household of faith*, because some men are not so well satisfied in this Particular, as in the rest. But the reasonableness of this will appear, 1. From the practice of all Times and Nations, conforming to each other, and agreeing in this, That the Priesthood was to be provided for apart, and that it was to be maintained in honour and esteem: Where-ever there has been People, there has been Religion, such as it was; where-ever there has been Religion, there have been Persons consecrated and set apart from Secular Employments to attend its service; and where-ever it has been so, there was a maintenance provided for them at the Publick Charge. 2<sup>ly</sup>. It was so by God's Appointment with the *Jews*. 3<sup>ly</sup>. It was so by Christ's Appointment under the Gospel, as appears from the Passage before cited by St. Paul, 1 Cor. 9. 14. *Even so hath the Lord ordained, That they who preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.* And tho St. Paul himself work'd for his Living in a Secular Employment, and some perhaps at that

that time with him ; yet the case was singular; and he chose to do so for particular ends and purposes he had, and argued strongly in behalf of others provision, tho he made no use of it himself: And there has been no other Instance since his time, of any Church-man that hath taken up a profess'd Employment or Trade to live by, without great Scandal to the Church, and against its Rules and Canons. No People, till of late, ever thought it decent to remove from the Shop to the Pulpit : None from the days of *Corah, Dathan, and Abiram*, till some years ago, have dar'd to say with them, *That all the Congregation were holy, every one of them, and the Lord among them*, in the sense of those deplorable Sufferers. 4thly. The Canons of the Church have not only forbid them taking up any Trade or Calling, but the Laws of the Land have made it highly Penal for them so to do,\*even to the taking of a Farm to rent, which yet is one of the most innocent, and least scandalous ways of living, amongst us. Lastly, Tho this should be permitted them, yet the way of Education that is absolutely necessary to the accomplishing and fitting People for the Ministry, does perfectly unqualifie them for any other Employment; and the time that is necessarily spent in the due discharging of that Office, will afford them but little leisure to attend any other gainful one. These Reasons, whose Heads I have on'y mentioned, with a great many others that easily occur to any thinking person, may be sufficient to shew the reasonableness and equity of St. Paul's remembring the *Galatians*, *That in their doing good to all men, they should have a more especial regard to such as are of the household of faith.*

But tho the Apostle's Argument do necessarily require, That by the *Household of Faith*, be here especially meant the *Pastors of the Church, and them that teach*; yet those

Numb. 16. 3.

\*21 H. 8. c. 13.

those terms do also comprehend the whole Christian Church, all the body of Believers, as opposed to the Prophane Gentiles, and to the Unbelieving *Jews*; and then the words are to be taken in this sense; You are in danger to be taught by the *Jews*, with whom I find you frequently converse, That all your Charity is to be tied to one Nation, and confined to People of the same persuasion; but this is too narrow a Notion of the Christian Charity, which is designed to enlarge mens hearts, and to extend their love and kindness over all the world; the Commands of Christ, and consequently his Apostle's Exhortations are, That Christians should do good to *all men*; but that where a preference can be made, without offence to Charity, it be made in behalf of Christ's Servants; If there come a competition betwixt a *Jew*, a *Gentile*, and a Christian, and the Merits and the Wants be equal, the preference should be made in favour of the Christian, in honour of our Lord, and to the encouragement of his Religion. And the same reason there is, that in our distributions among Christians, respect be had to those that are the best, that behave themselves more devoutly towards God, and carefully and honestly towards their Neighbours, where the distress is equal, and the necessities alike; for the better people are, the nearer relation they have to God, and the higher Offices they bear, as it were, in God's Household, and consequently have a better title to the benefits exhorted to in the Text, *To them especially that are of the household of faith.*

- III. *Thirdly*, Here is the Time expressed of doing this good, namely, *whilst we have opportunity. Yet a little while is the light with you, walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you; for he that walketh in darkness,*  
faith

knoweth not whither he goeth ; While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light, saith our Saviour, Joh. 12. 35. Give glory to the Lord your God, saith the Prophet, Jer. 13. 16. Before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. I must work (saith the Lord of Day and Night himself, John 9. 4.) the works of him that sent me, while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work. There is a Light, and a Day, and a Time given us all, to work out our Salvation in, to do the Will of God, to perform his Commands, and to perfect the business in, he sent us hither for. And behold (as St. Paul says, 2 Cor. 6. 2. now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation. The Light and the Day is this life, and the place is this world, and it is now, and it is here, that we must walk in the ways of God, and do the works of his Commandments. Now while we live, is the time of making matters sure; now is the only opportunity of doing good, which if we once let slip, there is no more recovering it ; for *there is no wisdom in the grave*, saith Solomon; and *he that goeth down thither, shall come up no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more*, saith Job 7. 9. Since then it is agreed upon at all hands, That it is all our Duties to do all the good we can, as we have opportunity, and that we have no opportunity of doing it, beyond this life. Why is not doing good, the consequence of these two Premises? How comes it that men know the necessity of doing it, and the benefit of it when done, and the time allotted them to do it in, and yet there is so little done? The reason, I think, is this, That men promise to themselves still better opportunities than the present time, they think, affords them : They put the execution of their good Purposes

Eccl. 9. 10.

off from day to day, and imagine that a more convenient season will present it self; That to morrow and the next day may produce some new matter, and change the circumstances of things to their advantage; and waver about in these uncertainties, till Life it self, the great Opportunity, is unexpectedly cut off, and all their thoughts perish: Whereas if they were as wise in this, as in other matters, they would rather argue thus; I find I am obliged by Nature, Reason, and Religion, and (God be thanked) by my own inclinations, to do all the good I can; and I know assuredly withall, that the good to be done by me, is to be done in this life, while it pleases God to continue me in this World; and because I can't possibly tell how long I have to live, and what is like to be the number of my days, and that every day produces some strange instance of the uncertainty of life, and the suddenness of Death, therefore I must put my designs of doing good, in execution presently, for fear I should be prevented; my desires and resolutions may prove abortive, if I defer them any longer; therefore my *Purposes* shall be, as soon as possibly they can, *Performances*. Can any Premises be plainer? Can any consequence be juster and more reasonable than this? I must do good whilst I have opportunity, but I can't tell how long this opportunity may last, or when it will end; I am only sure of the Present time, that which I have in possession is only mine; therefore if I will secure my self, I must do all the good I can immediately, and whilst the time is in my hand; the time to come is none of mine; I am not Master of the ensuing Year, nor can command the Month that's entring: If I bid the Morning hasten, or the Evening slacken its pace, because that I intend to do some good, they neither hear nor mind me, but proceed according to appointment, and



and each of them may find me cold and senseless, and incapable of either doing, or receiving any farther good in this world. And therefore when St. Paul advises to *do good whilst we have opportunity*, he advises us to do it as soon as possibly we can, and that we lose no Opportunity by delay : It may otherwise happen to us, as it did to the poor man that promised himself such ease and pleasure in the enjoyment of the Fruits and Riches he had treasur'd up ; *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee, and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided ?* We frame a great many fine projects in our heads, contrive abundance of good designs, and intend to do the Lord knows how much charity ; but the Sentence passes out from God upon us, and cuts us off in the midst of all our Purposes, and what is then become of all our good intentions ? We are gone to a place where great account will be had of all the good we actually have done, and would have done, if we had had but opportunity, but little or none at all will be had of that which vanished in design, and went no farther than the Brain. But that may not be the worst in some cases, where we shall give account for all the Abilities and Opportunities we had of doing good, but over-slept or quite neglected.

But *Secondly*, There is an Opportunity of the *Will*, as well as *Time*, which must be taken hold of ; for tho' the Opportunity of Time may be continued to a man, yet the Will and Inclination may be changed : The Will, we know, is very uncertain, and tacks about with every new Variety of Accidents ; the Inclinations alter with and without reason, as they see convenient ; and he that promises to himself at this time, that Six Months hence he will have the Mind and Inclination to do such and such things, understands his Temper but a

little, and is but indifferently acquainted with the inconstancy of humane Nature, and the deceitfulness of his own Heart. He may be sure enough indeed, that if he be then of the same Opinion he is now, that he shall do the things he now resolves on; but, for ought he knows, his mind may be then averse from the purposes he now makes; and therefore if they are good, he had best fulfil them in their properest season, which is *Now*, when Time and Inclination meet and are agreed. The Mind (I say) is humorous and fantastick, toss'd up and down in great uncertainty, and even the gravest, soberest and most necessary Resolutions, are oftentimes perverted by the most inconsiderable and trivial accidents, and therefore we must strike in with the Inclinations presently, and not permit the designs of doing good; to cool and grow remiss.

Sometimes it happens that the mind is warm'd with some unusual supernatural Heat, and is ardently enflamed with the desire of doing good, and it looks like an Impulse from Heaven; but if it be not presently complied with, it returns no more, but vanishes. Sometimes a man returns from Church, and the Sacrament, and sometimes rises from his Prayers, or from reading or hearing an affectionate Discourse; sometimes is seiz'd upon the sudden, with a heart full fraught with godly Purposes, charg'd with good Intentions, and excellent Resolves; he finds himself sensibly affected with what passed, sees the reasonableness and the necessity of changing his course, and doing all the good he can, whilst he continues in this world; but returning to his Business and Employment, entertaining his Friends and Guests, repeating the News, giving Orders to his Servants, resolving to prosecute one Affair to morrow, and another the next day, and so on, the designs



signs of doing good begin to wear out of his mind, and all those thoughts perish; and if by accident they are again reviv'd the next good Opportunity, they have still the same fate to dye abortive, for want of being presently complied with, and exerted into good Acts. So that he who intends to follow Saint Paul's Advice of doing good whilst he has opportunity, must by all means resolve, to attend to the motions of his heart, and to take himself, as it were, in the good humour.

*Thirdly*, There is also an Opportunity of Power, to be complied withal, and without which the Others signify but little; for Men may have both *Time* and *Will* to do good, that have not the Opportunity of *Power*. And indeed it is often seen, that when men have *Time* and *Power*, they want the *Will*; and when they have *Will* and *Time*, they want the *Power*: if therefore they would be secure, they must do it when they are able. Not that any one shall be blam'd or punish'd for not doing good, when he has no power of doing it, but for omitting it, whilst he had the power; for not doing it before he was disabled. And the reasonableness of complying with the Exhortation in the Text, whilst we have power, depends especially on the uncertainty of humane Affairs, and the instability of all Conditions. If a man will patronize the Innocent, protect the Weak, defend the Poor and Fatherless, and see that such as are in need and necessity have right; if he will correct the Dissolute, restrain the Oppressor, and prosecute the wicked and malicious Persecutors of the injur'd Poor, he must do it whilst he is a Judge and Magistrate, and has the power and opportunity in his hands, for else his Pity comes too late, when his Power is gone: and his love of Justice, and designs of  
doing

doing it, end in imperfect wishes. And so it is in the designs of Charity of all sorts; They must be brought to effects, they must be accomplish'd while we have abilities; for many are the ways, and sudden are the accidents, that disable men from doing good. As every Element contributes to the enriching, so it does to the impoverishing of People; and every little thing that makes for, does also sometimes make against a Man; and it is hardly possible for an Accident that is exceeding favourable to one, but it must also have an ill aspect on another, or that one Kingdom should flourish mightily without some others decaying. So that the uncertainty of mens continuing in a prosperous state, should be an argument to hasten them on to doing good, whilst it continues, and not as it is commonly made, a pretence for withholding Charity; Men make it an excuse for doing none at all. They see so many sad Accidents, so many Families reduced to beggery and want, so many Storms and Tempests on the Seas, so many Inundations and Fires at Land, that though they are at present enabled to do good, yet they can't tell how long it will be so with them, and therefore they forbear. Whereas for this very reason, they should do what good they could immediately. Their Estates, they say, are expos'd to a great many sad Chances; Yes, they are, therefore, say I, secure some part of them from all Chance; secure them in the bowels of the Poor; secure them with the blessing of God; Put them into his Protection, and then they will be safe: make Him your Bondsmen, and he will be responsible. Had you rather trust the Seas with all you have, than God with a very little part? Is it safer in a Board two inches thick, within a yard or two of the devouring Sea, and expos'd to the fury of a Storm, than under the protection of the Almighty?

Almighty ? Is it safer, think you, where it may become a prey to Fire and Thieves, than where no Accidents or Men can reach it ? But what if Peoples Fears should come to pass ? what if all they had should indeed be consumed by Fire, or taken away by Villains ? Would the loss be greater, for having given away some portion of it to the Poor ? Would it not rather comfort one, to think that some was saved, and saved so very well ? But what lamentable Excuses must a man be forced to make on these accounts ? I would do no good when I could, because I was afraid I might, by chance, be disabled from doing it. Why, what's the difference betwixt chusing to be disabled, and being made unable by accident ? but that one is *a fault*, and the other *a misfortune*, and you chose the fault, and are fallen into the misfortune ? I would do no good when I could, because I was afraid, of what ? that I might come to want my self. Then put these things together. *I was afraid of relieving others wants, lest I should come to be reliev'd my self.* Well, but now you are become an Object of Charity, by some of the Accidents you so much dreaded, and who shall help you ? Who shall afford you that relief that you denied to others, for very fear you should be forc'd to ask your self ? Don't you perceive that the Judgment of God hath overtaken you in this matter, and that you are caught in your own Snare, and that the very fear of falling into misery your self, should have made you charitable to another, which yet you made the reason why you were not so ? I refus'd to do good, when I was able, but now I would, and cannot : this is the best that can be said by you ; but how are you assur'd of this, that you would, if you could, do good ? You remember the time when you could, and would not ; and you remember the reason

son which hindred you, *i. e.* the uncertainty of mens Conditions, and the instability of Humane Things; and since that reason is not like to mend upon your hands, why should you think your mind would not be the same again, in the same condition? And therefore he that refuses to do good, because he is afraid of evil times, and sad mischances, is a miserable Man, whether those times and chances overtake him or not. If they do not, he is a miserable man, that does no good when he is able: and if they do overtake him, then he is miserable with a witness; first, in being depriv'd of what he lov'd so dearly; secondly, in the sad remembrance, that whilst he had his Riches, they were useless to him, and he did no manner of good with them. Whereas, on the contrary, If the Charitable man, by God's permission, fall into misfortune; if he, that has in his time been good to those that wanted, come by sad mischance to want himself, he does not only find mankind ready to pity and relieve him, but he has the greatest ease and satisfaction in the World about him, in his mind: He remembers that whilst he was Possessor of his Wealth, he did what good with it he could, and that the Needy shar'd with him. He can rejoyce with Job in his Affliction, *Job 29. 12. Because I delivered the poor that cried, and the Fatherless, and him that had none to help him; the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widows heart to sing for joy.* It intitles him to the hopes of receiving benefit from others; it makes his State not half so troublesome, in freeing him from the remembrance that would plague him, if he had neglected doing good whilst he had Opportunity; But now being well secur'd of that, he is able to say with comfort, Whilst I had it, I us'd it as I should; and now 'tis gone, no more will be expected;

sted ; The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord. These are the senses in which this Phrase, *Whilst we have opportunity*, is to be understood : We must do good, whilst we have time, when we have will, and whilst we are able : Before God cuts us off by death, whilst our Inclinations are bent that way, and for fear we fall into misfortune, and become unable.

*Lastly*, To the encouraging us to the doing all the good we can, we have the reward we are to set continually before our eyes, implied in the word *therefore*. *Let us not be weary of well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not* : Therefore *whilst we have opportunity, let us do good to all men*. The practice here exhorted to, is Pleasant, Profitable and Necessary : the Time we have to do it in, is very short, the Will inconstant, and the Opportunities not many. 'Tis a thing we like exceedingly whilst doing, and as well when done ; We shall all of us wish one day, we had attended to this matter ; and they that have done most, will wish they had done yet more ; and they who have done little or none, will wish they had done nothing else. It is that which makes us think on the time past with ease and comfort, and on the life to come with hope and pleasure. The Day of Trouble, and the Day of Death, are the two proper times to try the use and excellence of things, and friendships in, and in both these times there is nothing stands a Man in more and better stead, than the remembrance of his Charitable Acts. The Soul is then exceeding busie, and looking out continually for what may give it ease and quiet ; and finding all external Succours fail, turns and descends into it self, and there revolves the Actions of the life past, to find what has been done that

it can fasten on, and can abide by : what it can feed upon at present with content, and what afford a comfortable prospect for the future. The Splendors of the life past, the pompous gay Appearances the Man hath made, the mighty Friendships and Dependencies contracted, the honourable Visits given, and had ; the great Entertainments, the numerous Train of Servants and Attendants, with all that goes along with, and that follows a magnificent Luxurious Fortune, do then afford but little satisfaction to the mind, upon Reflection : It rather wishes that those things had never past : There is fear at least, and some suspicion, due to the menagery of that life ; it was a state of danger, liable to the disorders of excess and wantonness, and to a great deal of folly and vanity at the best ; And if it escaped these Evils, yet 'tis gone, and a man is never the better for all that's past. Even the necessary Provisions made for Children, Wife and Family, do but barely content the mind at present, and free it from the perplexity that would arise from the thoughts of leaving those it lov'd, in want : but the recollecting this, creates no new or extraordinary complacency in the mind : these are not the things it cares to dwell on long, or feeds upon with pleasure. But the remembrance of its Acts of Charity is *that* it lives upon, *that* it perpetually rolls about, and *that* it turns to every moment. The Tables that have been spread for the Poor, the Portions that have been sent out to the hungry, the Drink that has reliev'd the miserable thirsty, the Cloaths that have been made for, and bestowed upon the Naked ; the Counsel, Visits, and the helps that have supported those in Prison, these things are fed on with delight, these fill the heart with pleasure and contentment, these cool the ragings of the Fever, and support



support the weakness of Consumptions, and abate the pains of our acute Diseases, and make mens Beds in all their Sicknesses. So that there is no one thing besides, that is so much its own reward in this life, that begets a man more good will, that makes more Friends, that creates a greater esteem, that fits men for the assistance both of Strangers and the Neighbourhood, that stirs and provokes the Prayers of all that want, and all that see and hear of it, and pulls down Blessings from the Throne of Grace, than this kind, benign disposition of doing good to the Poor; nothing that is so faithful an Assistant in the days of Sorrow, and of Sickness, and the hour of Death, as the doing Acts of Charity, and the shewing mercy to the Needy. The very pleasure and the profit of doing good, are of themselves an argument of mighty force, to draw men to the doing it; but when we have the Promises of God, the Hopes of Heaven and everlasting Happiness, propos'd for our encouragement, what is there that can sway against these powerful Motives?

I have now done with the Text, and have shewed the reasonableness and the necessity, together with the benefits of complying with its Exhortation. It remains that I set before you an Example too, and then conclude.

I am persuaded, Gentlemen, that the memory of *This Lady*, upon whose account we now meet, is much more dear and precious in your mind; and that I do her greater Honours, when I tell of her good Works of Charity that she hath done, than if I could, without those Works, recount abundance of her other Qualities, and Titles. It would be, methinks, but a very poor thing for me to be able to tell you, that she was descended of Great Ancestours, and married very honourably, and had a great many lovely Children, and kept a

mighty sumptuous Table, made most magnificent Entertainments, and wore a world of fine Jewels, and went in the richest Habits of her time, kept I don't know how many Coaches, and Liveries without number. I am ignorant of all, and any of these Particulars ; but were they all true, I should be nothing forward to recount them : I should think I dealt more kindly by her Memory, and better answered her Intentions in our meeting here, to say she left a *Shilling* to the Poor, nay but a *Penny* to relieve some hungry Creature. But greater was her Charity, and greater be her Praises. I am to read

*A (Long and Glorious) Catalogue of the Charitable Gifts of the Lady Mary Ramsey, which are Yearly Paid by the Governors of Christ's Hospital, out of Means which she bestowed upon it, for these Godly Uses.*

I shall not so much as ask of you the patience of hearing it. It would affront your Goodness and Religion to mistrust it.

Thus it begins :

<i>To the Master of Peter-House in Cambridge, towards the Maintenance of Two Fellows, and Four Scholars, yearly,</i>	} l. s. d.	40 00 00
<i>Towards the Maintenance of Twelve Scholars, Six in Cambridge, and Six in Oxford, yearly</i>		

These two Particulars may look, perhaps, to some, rather like Works of *Munificence* than *Charity* : If it were so, they are full as useful, and full as necessary as the other : But indeed they are works of great Charity, greater than you can easily at the first perceive. There's many a very hopeful man lost, for want of better Maintenance at the Universities ; for want of means to  
subsist



subsist there longer than their poor allowances will let them; for want of Books, and other necessary Encouragements of Study; without which, the Mind is cramped, and forced into a narrow and illiberal way of Thinking; and all that generous, sprightly Vigor of Soul, which might have form'd and compass'd Noble Purposes, sinks into little trifling aims of getting Food and Raiment, and just living. And had there been but more such Benefactors to those Places, like this Lady, I may venture to say, a great many Churches, at a distance, would be better serv'd, and many who are now objects of pity, and reproach, might have become the Ornaments and Honours of the Nation.

*Towards the maintenance of a Free Grammar School, at Halstead in Essex, besides Repairs; Yearly,*

l. s. d.  
20 00 00

*Towards the Maintenance of a Free Writing School in Christ's Hospital; Yearly,*

20 00 00

The Benefits of Education are too great to be quite forgotten here, and too well known to be insisted long upon. Nature brings forth the *Creature*, but Education makes the *Man*: We are born *Reasonable*, but whether we shall reason *well* or *ill*, depends upon our bringing up, and upon that the whole felicity of our life. It is not to be expected, that whilst we are Children, we should love these advantageous Gifts, and praise their good Designers and Bestowers; but 'twould be very hard, ungrateful, and unkind, if when we are men, and feel the Benefits, we should be backward to recount these Works with Praise and Honour.

*Towards the Curing of Maimed Soldiers in the Hospital of St. Bartholomew, Yearly,*

l. s. d.  
10 00 00

This

This is truly, and most properly to be, with *Job*, eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame. What can be nobler? What more just? Than that they who have hazarded their Lives and Limbs for the Safety and the Honour of their Countrey, and brought a mangled Body home, the ruins of a man, should find some Place of Comfort to retire to, to assuage the smarting of their festering Wounds, and have or Wine, or Oyl, or Balm poured on them by some good Samaritan? She is this good Samaritan, that hath compassion on these stript and wounded Creatures; that brings them to this Inn, and heretakes care of them. I say, with our Saviour, to you every one, *Go and do thou likewise.*

*Towards the Relief of the Poor Prisoners*    l.   s.   d.  
*in Newgate, Ludgate, Woodstreet,*    {   10   00   00  
*and the Poultry Counters; Yearly,*    }

Whatever People now-a-days may think of this Piece of Charity, as needless, or as ill bestowed, yet when the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy Angels with him, and shall sit upon his Throne, and before him all nations shall be gathered; then they shall change their mind, but change it to no purpose. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me.* Prisoners, alas! have all these needs, and in a very great degree, and therefore are included certainly, but not included only, but particularly mentioned; *I was in prison, and ye came unto me:* Where by coming, must be meant coming to purpose, coming to cheer the afflicted, comfort the distress'd, raise the disconsolate, by good advice, and friendly admonition; but certainly coming to relieve

*relieve them* in their several necessities, as is plain from the reason of the thing it self, as also from the Duties and good Offices 'tis join'd with. To those who think these offices of visiting, and comforting, and helping Prisoners, ill bestowed, and time ill spent, I leave the reading of the rest of that Chapter, *Mat. 25.* from the 41<sup>st</sup>. to the 46<sup>th</sup> verse; where they shall meet with that left-hand Sentence that at last will overtake them.

*Towards the Releasing of Poor Men and } l. s. d.  
Women out of the several Prisons in Lon- } 30 00 00  
don, and Borough of Southwark; Yearly, }*

This was a *Wife*, as well as *Good Lady*; she knew this Gift was much more profitable to the Commonwealth, than the other, and therefore trebled it. When mens Misfortunes have reduced them to that lamentable Place, it is great Charity to keep them there from perishing by Cold and Hunger; but it is greater far, to get them out again, both to the Publick, and Particulars. The King has lost a Subject, the Government a Hand, the Corporation, perhaps, an useful Member; but, to be sure, the Family has lost the Means of its Subsistence; the Wife has lost her Head, and the Children a Parent and Provider; and *Five* or *Six* perhaps are blest in a *Release*, where *One* alone is profited by Alms in an *Imprisonment*. I will not doubt but she had also a regard in this, to the Prisoner's Spiritual Concern, to the benefit of his Soul also; for I fear the nature and condition of those Places of Confinement, were in her days too like to what they are in ours; the little Images of Hell, not only in their Chains and Darkeness, but in those dreadful Oaths and Execrations, those raging Blasphemies and Prophanations of all things sacred, with all the cursed train of Lewdnesses, and horrid

rid Immoralities, imaginable. Oh 'tis a fearful use they make of their Afflictions: There's many a man, they say, goes in both Just, and Honest, and Religious, but unfortunate, that comes out, or abides therein, after some time, a Fiend incarnate, a Devil in Humane shape, prepared for every sort of Villany; and therefore, even in this respect, it is a mighty piece of Charity, to release a Prisoner *betimes*, to lead him out of that Temptation, and deliver him from that evil.

*Towards the Maintenance of Ten Poor } l. s. d.  
Aged Men, and Ten Poor Widows, with } 60 00 00  
their Apparel, yearly,*

When *Tabitha*, full of Good Works, and Almdeeds, which she did, was dead, and *Peter* was sent for to her, the Widows stood by him weeping, and shewing him the Coats that *Dorcas* made, whilst she was with them. These Widows were themselves the Living Monuments of *Dorcas's* Charity, and thought the Coats and Garments she had made, and ordered to be made for them, and other poor, the most prevailing Argument to move the Apostle to Compassion, and the most honourable mention they could make of their deceased Mistress; and so indeed it was. It was necessary in those days, to magnifie the Power of Christ in his Apostles, and to confirm the truth of his Doctrines by Miracles, and therefore *Tabitha* must be raised from the Dead. We cannot raise this *Tabitha* from the Dead: We are not the Apostles Successors in Miracles and mighty Works, but only in the ordinary standing Ministration of the Word and Sacraments: But we can tell you, She shall live for ever; this is the Way to Heaven, and this the Gate of Righteousness, by which, through Faith in Christ, and by the Grace of God, She

She made her Passage to Eternal Happiness, and God shall raise Her up Glorious and Immortal, to live and Reign with him for ever. Nor shall Her Memory fail on Earth, you Living Monuments, Succession of her Charity, shall raise her from the dead in all mens praises and esteem, and you shall cause this righteous One to be had in everlasting remembrance.

<i>Towards the Relief of the Parish of Christ-</i>	}	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
<i>Church, yearly,</i>		02	10	00
<i>To the Poor of the Parish of Saint Peter's</i>	}	04	00	00
<i>Poor, yearly,</i>				
<i>To the Poor of Saint Mary Wolnoths, yearly,</i>		03	00	00
<i>To the Poor of Saint Andrews Under-</i>	}	03	00	00
<i>shaft, yearly,</i>				

I hope some of you will think these are small Sums, and that the necessities of the Poor require and call for greater; they do so, and when you have thank'd and prais'd God for this Lady's Gifts, then add your own, and make up what is wanting.

*For two Sermons to be preached, yearly,*      02 00 00

It will not become me here to say much to this. I have already said something in explaining the Text, which it seems, the Deceased Lady both understood and practis'd.

<i>Paid more by the said Governors out of the</i>	}	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
<i>Means by her given this year, above</i>		80	00	00

*The total Sum paid yearly by the said Govern.*      324 10 00

I have now done with this good Catalogue; I wish it would have held, at this rate, an hour longer. I have read it by desire, and in course, according to the custome, on this Day, on which the Church celebrates the Mar-

*tyrdom* of Stephen, whose standing Office was the ministration of Charity, and providing for the Poor. But, I hope, you don't come here to hear it only in course and custome. There's no body can think a Lady of such goodness could be so vain, as to appoint two Sermons, purely to get a crowd of People round, to tell the Charities, and sing the Praises of her. No, there was Charity design'd by that, but it was Charity to those that should be Hearers. She was in hopes that her Example would excite some others to the same good Works, for Examples are of mighty force; we see too much of it in bad ones, and surely the good may have *some* influence. She was in hopes, that something might be said, by chance, or by design, that might awaken some to the exercise of that good Grace, which all men think so excellent and necessary, and all men like so well in *others*. Don't then defeat such good and reasonable hopes; but if what I have said, shall nothing move you, yet let her great Example speak, and speak to purpose. Order the matter so, that this *last Gift* may be as well bestowed as any of the rest, according to her good Intentions, which cannot be, without your imitation of her, in some kind or other. Take home this Catalogue with you, and try to copy after it. You'll hardly find a wiser. It will become your *Wills* and *Testaments* much better, than a great many *Items* that are there. You give your Souls in your *Inprimis*, generally, to a very good place, but you take no care to provide good Works to help them thither: you bestow your Bodies very decently, commonly, but some of *these particulars* would make them smell much sweeter, and send out a more fragrant odour.

We could strew much sweeter, and much finer Flowers upon the Dead, if their Wills were better filPd than



than commonly they are; if they would take some care, to have something of Religion in them more than bare words. How can the Rich and Wealthy of this World, begin their Testaments so solemnly, *In the name of God*, and never think upon him afterwards? How can a Christian Man bestow a Hundred thousand Pounds upon his Son, upon his Nephew, or the Lord knows who, and little or nothing on the Poor? The *Wife* must be left with a mighty Joyn-ture, all her Jewels, Plate, and abundance of Ready Money, by which she learns to forget him sooner, and becomes the easier prey. The *Daughter* must have a prodigious Fortune, that she may fall into the hands of lustful Villains, and make it worth their while to venture upon violence, and death; or else be married purely for her Money, and be for ever miserable. The *Son* must have wherewithal to reproach his Father's meanness and frugality, and make him ashamed to own his Lineage and Descent; but enough, be sure, to spoil his care and industry, and enough too frequently to make him dye a Beggar. And if these are wanting, the *Nephew* must have all, that the *Parent* (no, the *Uncle*) mayn't be said to have taken all those pains, and made himself a Slave, and miserable, for nothing, without an Heir to leave it to. For what a lamentable thing would that be, to the poor man's Ashes, if it should not be said by the Neighbourhood, that such a one left his Nephew *forty, fifty, or a hundred thousand Pounds*, although he neither wanted nor deserv'd it; but *nothing to the Poor*, tho they did both? There must be Families, I know, and must be distinctions, and there must be provision made for all these particulars, but the Poor must not be so forgotten as they are; they must come in for a share, or all the rest will want its blessing.

And

And don't you think 'tis safer, and much better, to secure the main, by bestowing a little well? Believe it, Gentlemen, you are not so much Masters, and absolute Lords of your Estates and Wealth, as Stewards of God's Household: *Now Stewards must be found faithful*, as St. Paul says, and must dispense these Goods according to their Master's will which he hath oft express'd, shall be, in part, among his poor and needy Servants, and then I leave the Application to your selves.

Remember (to conclude) That our doing Acts of Charity, is necessary; remember that the time of doing them is short, but the Reward of them when done, eternal. We cannot sow long, but we shall reap the fruits of it for ever; we cannot always do good Acts of Charity, but we shall always be receiving everlasting Recompences. For the bestowing of a little fading Riches here, we shall lay up Riches in abundance, for the time to come; we shall exchange the Treasures that are here subject to a thousand chances, for those in Heaven, secure in God's hand; for the want of a little convenience, or some superfluities of life, we shall be satisfied with more than we can ask or think of. I will end all with the Charge of St. Paul to Timothy, 1. 6. 17. — and in Timothy to Me, and all the Ministers of God's Word, — *Charge them*, — and in obedience to that Saint's Command, — *I do charge them that are rich in this world, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute, laying up in store for themselves (sure you like that) a good foundation, against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life.* Which God of his Infinite Mercy bring us all to, for Christ his sake, who for our sakes became poor, that we through him might be made Rich. To whom, &c.

1 Cor. 4. 2.

F I N I S.



